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101113Z Jan 02

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	DS-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	DCP-01
	NSAE-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	/004W					

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0693
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 HARARE 000096

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF; ALSO AF/S

NSC FOR SENIOR DIRECTOR FRAZER

PARIS FOR NEARY

LONDON FOR GURNEY

NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/10/12

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL
COUNSELOR UTETE

CLASSIFIED BY DCM REWHITEHEAD DUE TO 1.5 (B) AND (D).

REF: 01 HARARE 3229

1. (C) SUMMARY. AMBASSADOR AND DCM MET WITH PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR CHARLES UTETE AND HIS CHIEF OF STAFF ON JANUARY 9. THE AMBASSADOR CITED CONTINUED U.S. ENGAGEMENT IN ZIMBABWE -- COUNTER-TERRORISM, HIV/AIDS ASSISTANCE, FOOD ASSISTANCE -- BUT NOTED THAT PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED USG CONCERNS OVER NECESSARY CHANGES TO ENSURE FREE AND FAIR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS HAD IN FACT DEEPENED. THE AMBASSADOR CAUTIONED THAT WHILE WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE GOZ, GOZ ACTIONS WILL BE THE DETERMINANT. UTETE REPLIED WITH THE STANDARD GOZ LINE ON ALL POINTS SAVE THE LATTER, ON WHICH HE DISSEMBLED. THE MEETING REVERTED TO CORDIAL VERBAL SPARRING, WITH UTETE SPEAKING MOST POINTEDLY ON THE ISSUES OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN ELECTIONS AND THE PASSAGE OF ZDERA. IT WAS OUR SENSE THAT UTETE BOTH LISTENED AND HEARD, BUT NOT THAT HE -- LIKE MOST ZANU-PF INSIDERS -- IS PREPARED TO EMBRACE A CHANGE OF POLICY. END SUMMARY.

THE GOOD, THE BAD,

12. (C) THE AMBASSADOR BROKE THE ICE WITH AN EXCHANGE ON JAZZ (UTETE IS SOMETHING OF A COGNOSCENTE), THEN SEGUED
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INTO THE USG'S CONTINUED POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH ZIMBABWE ON NUMEROUS FRONTS. HE CITED COOPERATION ON COUNTER-TERRORISM AND NOTED THE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. OBSERVING THAT A LONG STRUGGLE LIES AHEAD, HE STRESSED THAT CONTINUED COOPERATION IS ESSENTIAL. IN THE DIRECT BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, USAID AND CDC REMAIN FULLY ENGAGED WITH THE GOZ AND NGOS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST HIV/AIDS. THE USG HAS CONSECRATED AN ANNUAL WAR CHEST OF USD 13 MILLION FOR ITS ZIMBABWE HIV/AIDS INITIATIVES. IN ADDITION, WE ARE AWARE OF IMPENDING FOOD SHORTAGES IN ZIMBABWE AND HAVE BEEN WORKING SINCE LAST SUMMER TO HELP PROVIDE NECESSARY ASSISTANCE. OUR ATTEMPTS TO BROKER A BILATERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WITH WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL HAD BEEN SCUTTLED BY THE GOZ OVER TECHNICAL CONCERNS, INCLUDING OBJECTIONS TO GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS, BUT WE WERE WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM AND BELIEVED THAT WE WERE NEAR A SOLUTION THAT WOULD PERMIT US TO ASSIST IN A TIMELY FASHION.

...AND THE UGLY

13. (C) THE AMBASSADOR CONTINUED THAT THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION POSES SERIOUS CHALLENGES FOR ZIMBABWE AND ITS RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION ACCEPTED INTERNATIONALLY WOULD LEND NEW LEGITIMACY TO ZIMBABWE AND ITS GOVERNMENT; TO THE CONTRARY, A BOTCHED ELECTION WOULD SPAWN ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS FOR THE COUNTRY. THE AMBASSADOR RECALLED THAT
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PDAS BELLAMY HAD MADE SIMILAR OBSERVATIONS DURING HIS VISIT LAST OCTOBER (REFTEL), BUT SINCE THAT TIME IT WAS OUR VIEW THAT THE PROBLEMS IN ZIMBABWE HAVE WORSENERED, SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE PASSAGE OF ZDERA. DURING HIS DECEMBER VISIT, ASSISTANT SECRETARY KANSTEINER STATED PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY TO GOZ OFFICIALS THAT ZDERA WAS AN INCENTIVES BILL WITH THE POTENTIAL TO IMPOSE RESTRICTIONS IF CERTAIN CONDITIONS WERE NOT MET. HE HAD EMPHASIZED THAT WHILE CONGRESS HAD PASSED THE BILL AND ASKED THE ADMINISTRATION TO CONSIDER THESE OPTIONS, THERE WAS STILL TIME FOR THE GOZ TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE FREE/FAIR ELECTIONS CONDUCTED IN AN OPEN MANNER.

14. (C) THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT THE BENCHMARKS FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS ADOPTED BY THE U.S. WERE IN FACT STANDARDS THAT THE GOZ HAD ALREADY ACCEPTED -- THE SADC-PF NORMS AND STANDARDS. DESPITE EARLY STATEMENTS BY PARLIAMENT SPEAKER MNANGAGWA THAT HE WOULD SEEK TO REMOVE SOME OF THE MORE CONTENTIOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORAL ACT, THERE NOW APPEARS TO BE A MOVEMENT TOWARD A LESS INCLUSIVE ELECTORAL PROCESS ABSENT CLEAR,

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	NSAE-00	SSO-00	SS-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00
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INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT BY A NEUTRAL BODY. IN ADDITION, THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN POLITICAL VIOLENCE, MUCH OF IT ASSOCIATED WITH GROUPS, SUCH AS WAR VETS, WHO PUBLICLY IDENTIFY WITH THE RULING PARTY. THE USG DOES NOT WANT TO GO THE NEGATIVE ROUTE AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE A FAIR ELECTORAL PROCESS. WE HOPE THE DIRECTION CAN BE CHANGED TO ALLOW FOR A POSITIVE ELECTORAL EXPERIENCE THAT WOULD PERMIT IMPROVED RELATIONS.

THANKS...

15. (C) UTETE REPLIED THAT ON THE COUNTER-TERRORISM FRONT, AS DISCUSSED WITH PDAS BELLAMY, THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE OF VIEW. THE GOZ NOTES WE HAVE TURNED AROUND CIRCUMSTANCES IN AFGHANISTAN. THERE IS THE STILL UNRESOLVED ISSUE OF THE DEFINITION OF TERRORISM, BUT NO ROOT DIFFERENCES. HE EXPRESSED ZIMBABWEAN APPRECIATION OF USG SUPPORT FOR VARIOUS HIV/AIDS INITIATIVES, AND NOTED THAT THE STRUGGLE SHOULD

BE MORE SHARPLY DEFINED, WITH THE GOZ USING ITS OWN
RESOURCES IN ADDITION TO THOSE OF OTHERS TO CHECK THE
SPREAD OF THE PANDEMIC.

BUT NO THANKS

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16. (C) UTETE OBSERVED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHICH ASPECT
TO DEAL WITH ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, BUT WOULD START
WITH VIOLENCE. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY
THAT THE AMBASSADOR RELIED ON NEWSPAPERS FOR
INFORMATION, WHICH WOULD INDEED INDICATE INCREASED
VIOLENCE. HE FELT THAT EFFORTS NOW UNDERWAY BY THE GOZ
WOULD HELP CHECK THIS, AND ADDED THAT IT IS NOT FAIR TO
STATE THAT GOZ SUPPORTERS PERPETRATE ALL VIOLENCE. THIS
PHENOMENON STRETCHES ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM.
WHAT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IS THAT THERE IS NO MECHANISM
WITHIN GOVERNMENT DESIGNED TO HAVE PEOPLE BEATEN. TO
THE CONTRARY, THE GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS THAT WHATEVER
THE SOURCE OF VIOLENCE, IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S DUTY TO
PREVENT SUCH BEHAVIOR.

17. (C) UTETE RECALLED THAT THE POLICE COMMISSIONER HAS
REPEATEDLY STATED THAT VIOLENCE WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED.
UNFORTUNATELY, THE GOZ HAS NEITHER THE PRESCIENCE TO
PREDICT WHERE VIOLENCE MAY FLARE NOR THE MANPOWER TO
COVER ALL CONTINGENCIES. IN THE PRESENT "CHARGED
ATMOSPHERE," SOME CRIMINAL ELEMENTS WERE INTRUDING UNDER
THE GUISE OF ONE POLITICAL PARTY OR THE OTHER.
JOURNALISTS HAD SENSATIONALIZED THIS ISSUE, BUT UTETE
REASSURED THE AMBASSADOR THAT IT IS NOT GOZ POLICY TO
USE VIOLENCE AS A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT. HE NOTED THAT
THIS WAS IN FACT NOT A VERY GOOD WAY TO ATTRACT SUPPORT,
SINCE VOTERS COULD VOTE FOR WHOMEVER THEY WISHED IN
ANONYMITY ONCE IN THE VOTING BOOTH. IT WAS UNLIKELY
THAT THEY WOULD VOTE FOR SOMEONE WHO HAD ABUSED THEM.

18. (C) UTETE TURNED TO PROPOSED ELECTORAL AMENDMENTS,
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STRESSING THAT THERE WERE PROVISIONS FOR AN INDEPENDENT
ELECTORAL COMMISSION IN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION REJECTED
DURING THE 2000 REFERENDUM. HE DESCRIBED THE
OPPOSITION'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE DRAFT AS "VERY
FOOLISH" -- WHEN IT FAILED TO PASS, THE GOZ HAD NO
CHOICE BUT TO REVERT TO THE PREVAILING LANCASTER HOUSE
CONSTITUTION. HE ADDED THAT ZANU-PF NO LONGER HAS A
LARGE ENOUGH PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY TO CHANGE THE
CONSTITUTION, AND MDC WOULD CERTAINLY REFUSE TO SUPPORT
ANY ZANU-PF INITIATIVE. AS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS
MONITORING (IN LIEU OF INDEPENDENT MONITORS), HE ARGUED
THAT CIVIL SERVANTS ARE NOT NECESSARILY SUPPORTERS OF
THE INCUMBENT GOVERNMENT. THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO
SUPPORT THE POLITICAL PARTY OF THEIR CHOICE, AND AS SUCH
ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BODY POLITIC. POLITICAL
PARTIES CAN CHOOSE THEIR OWN REPRESENTATIVES AT THE
POLLS; BY USING CIVIL SERVANTS, THE GOZ HAD SIMPLY HOPED
TO IMPROVE THE EXISTING ELECTORAL SYSTEM.

VERBAL SPARRING

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NSAE-00 IRM-00 SSO-00 SS-00 DSCC-00 DRL-02 NFAT-00
SAS-00 /004W

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19. (C) THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT WHILE HE DID NOT THINK IT NECESSARY TO REPLY POINT BY POINT, IT IS A FACT THAT SADC-PF RECOMMENDS ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION IN EACH MEMBER STATE. WE REALIZE THAT VIOLENCE IS NOT UNILATERAL AND DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING WE READ; HOWEVER, WE HAVE NUMEROUS RELIABLE SOURCES UPON WHICH TO RELY. HE CITED THE RECENT PRONOUNCEMENT BY A WAR VET THAT CHINHOYI AND BINDURA ARE "NO GO" ZONES FOR MDC, A STATEMENT NEVER REPUDIATED BY THE GOVERNMENT. UTETE REPLIED THAT HE HAD LIVED IN THE U.S. AND UNDERSTOOD THE PRINCIPLES OF FREE SPEECH -- NO ONE EXPECTS THE USG TO SPEAK OUT ON EVERY STATEMENT ANY AMERICAN CITIZEN MAKES. ONLY WHEN SOMEONE ACTS OUTSIDE THE LAW IS IT TIME FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO STEP IN. THE GOZ COULD NOT SPEND ALL OF ITS TIME REBUTTING EVERY CRAZY STATEMENT MADE BY SOME "SO CALLED" WAR VET.

110. (C) THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE ROOT PROBLEM IS A LACK OF TRUST IN THE ZIMBABWEAN POLITICAL SITUATION, AND THE LACK OF A MECHANISM TO CREATE THIS. THE ACTUAL FORM OF AN ELECTORAL COMMISSION IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS THE ROLE THAT SUCH A BODY PLAYS IN CREATING TRUST. IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE GOZ TO SEEK SUCH A MECHANISM TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND CREATE FAIR ELECTORAL RULES, AND RESPECT FOR THOSE RULES. UTETE AGREED THAT TRUST IS IMPORTANT FOR THE HEALTH OF THE COUNTRY BUT CITED THE MDC'S "BETRAYAL" OF ZANU-PF BY RENEGING ON AGREED SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDED ELECTORAL LAWS (WHICH FAILED TO
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PASS A VOTE IN PARLIAMENT).

111. (C) UTETE ADDED THAT HE WANTED TO BE FRANK -- THE SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE WAS PUMPED UP FROM OUTSIDE. OPPOSITION IDEAS AND TACTICS WERE IMPORTED FROM ABROAD; THE OPPOSITION SEEMED TO BE A CREATURE FROM THE OUTSIDE. THE GOZ WAS AWARE THAT FOREIGNERS FROM SOUTH AFRICA STAFFED OPPOSITION OFFICES. IT APPEARED THAT OUTSIDERS WERE SEEKING TO INFLUENCE ZIMBABWE'S INTERNAL POLITICAL PROCESS. IN THE U.S., HE OBSERVED, IT IS A CRIME FOR OUTSIDERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS. HOW CAN THE GOZ HAVE TRUST/CONFIDENCE WITH UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, WHICH ARE GROUNDED IN VERIFIABLE FACT? HE DERIDED "YOUR EU FRIENDS" AND SAID THE OPPOSITION SHOULD GARNER VOTES IN AN HONEST MANNER, NOT BECAUSE OF OUTSIDE WEALTH. THE AMBASSADOR REPEATED OUR VIEW THAT ELECTIONS SHOULD BE FREE AND FAIR, SO THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO RESPECT THE RESULTS. THE GOZ HAS THE POWER TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO CREATE THESE CONDITIONS.

ZDERA

112. (C) UTETE ASKED WHY ZDERA? DID THE USG INTEND TO IMPOSE SUCH ACTS AROUND THE WORLD ON EVERY GOVERNMENT WITH WHICH IT DISAGREED? UTETE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD WHY WE MIGHT DISAGREE WITH HOW THE GOZ IS HANDLING THINGS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE MANY REGIMES AROUND THE WORLD THAT ARE DOING MUCH WORSE. HOW HAS "LITTLE ZIMBABWE" SO PROVOKED CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION
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THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED THIS EXCEPTIONAL TREATMENT. THE AMBASSADOR CITED SEVERAL SPECIFIC INCIDENTS, SUCH AS JAILING THE DAILY NEWS EDITOR ON FLIMSY CHARGES SHORTLY BEFORE HIS SCHEDULED VISIT TO THE U.S. SUCH BEHAVIOR HAD PROVOKED STRONG FEELINGS. THE AMBASSADOR ADDED THAT ZIMBABWE IS IMPORTANT. IT HAS HAD STRONG INSTITUTIONS AND IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY. MANY FRIENDS OF ZIMBABWE ARE DISAPPOINTED. HE CONCLUDED THAT ZDERA IS TWO-EDGED -- INCENTIVES AND RESTRICTIONS -- AND THAT WE HOPE THAT EVENTS HERE EVOLVE IN SUCH A FASHION THAT INCENTIVES CAN BE INVOKED.

COMMENT

113. (C) NUMEROUS HALF-TRUTHS DO NOT NECESSARILY ADD UP TO THE WHOLE TRUTH. UTETE HEWED FAITHFULLY TO THE PARTY

LINE BUT SELDOM ADMITTED THE UNDERLYING MOTIVE BEHIND
GOZ ACTIONS. FOR INSTANCE, THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION DID
NOT FAIL POPULAR MUSTER IN 2000 BECAUSE OF PROVISIONS
FOR AN INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION, BUT RATHER

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BECAUSE IT CONTAINED ILL-ADVISED LAND REFORM LANGUAGE
AND BEEFED UP THE ALREADY SWEEPING POWERS OF THE
EXECUTIVE. WHATEVER THE POLICE COMMISSIONER'S RHETORIC,
THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE OF POLICEMEN STANDING ASIDE TO
PERMIT WAR VETS AND ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS TO WREAK HAVOC,
AND THE SAME POLICEMEN REACTING RAPIDLY OVER REPORTED
MDC VIOLENCE. UTETE WAS CLEARLY LISTENING TO WHAT WE
SAID, AND HEARD THE MESSAGE, BUT THERE WAS LITTLE
INDICATION THAT HE IS WILLING TO OPT FOR A CHANGE OF
POLICY. WE NOTE THAT UTETE, LIKE MANY PROMINENT ZANU-PF
INSIDERS, HAS BEEN STUNG BY THE IMPLICIT THREAT OF ZDERA
TARGETED SANCTIONS AND WHAT THIS MIGHT MEAN FOR
HIM/THEM.

SULLIVAN

CONFIDENTIAL

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